

Message Text

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43

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 /031 W
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O 151150Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1189

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0259

EXDIS

JERUSALEM PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, MASS, IS

SUBJ: ISRAEL'S FY 1975 ASSISTANCE REQUEST

REF: A) TEL AVIV 0230

B) STATE 7364

C) TEL AVIV 0232

D) STATE 3184

1. IN OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH ISRAELIS SINCE RECEIPT OF REFTEL D WE HAVE ASSUMED THAT FY 74 BUDGET REQUESTS FROM SEVERAL AGENCIES INVOLVED WOULD INCLUDE AID FOR ISRAEL IN ALL CATEGORIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH PATTERN OF PAST FEW YEARS AND ALONG LINES OF GOI REQUESTS (SEE GRAY PAPER TABLES). AS FAR AS SECURITY ASSISTANCE IS CONCERNED, WE ASSUME 50 MILLION DOLLARS IN SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE AND 300 MILLION DOLLARS IN FMS CREDIT.

2. WE HAD NO IDEA UNTIL RECEIPT OF REFTEL B THAT DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO DEFER DECISION ON SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL FOR PURPOSES OF FY 75 BUDGET. TO SAY THAT THIS IS A "SURPRISE" TO ME WOULD BE THE BUREAUCRATIC UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE YOUNG NEW YEAR.

3. THIS MEANS, OF COURSE, THAT WE WERE OPERATING ON WRONG ASSUMPTIONS WHEN WE PREPARED OUR RECENT CABLES ON CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS SUBJECT, WHICH INCLUDED A REPORT OF MY MEETING WITH FINMIN SAPIR AT REQUEST OF PRIMIN (REFS A & C).

IT ALSO MEANS THAT IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELIS HERE, THEY AND WE WERE PROBABLY OPERATING ON BASIS OF DIFFERENT ASSUMP-

TIONS. MOST SERIOUS IN THIS RESPECT WAS MY DISCUSSION WITH SAPIR. I BELIEVE SAPIR WAS EXPRESSING HIS CONCERN WITHIN CONTEXT OF "DEFERRED" SECURITY ASSISTANCE DECISION WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS POSSIBLE DECISION BY US TO CUT BACK OUR "REGULAR" AID PROGRAMS. I, OF COURSE, WAS FOCUSING ON SHER SUGGESTION FOR ONE BILLION DOLLARS IN "ADDITIONAL" ASSISTANCE.

4. I TRUST WASHINGTON HAS NO FURTHER SURPRISES RE FUTURE AID TO ISRAEL. I WOULD APPRECIATE LEARNING BACKGROUND OF POSITION REFLECTED IN REFHEL B, EXTENT TO WHICH ISRAELIS INFORMED OF IT, AND HOW DEPT NOW PLANS TO PROCEED.

5. I MUST REGISTER MY CONCERN ABOUT WISDOM OF DELETING "REGULAR" SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FROM FY 75 BUDGET. I CAN WELL UNDERSTAND DEFERMENT OF DECISIONS ON FINAL AMOUNTS OF EXTRAORDINARY ASSISTANCE REQUIRED. INDEED, MY POSITION ON THIS IS CLEAR. WE DO NOT YET HAVE ENOUGH INFO FOR FINAL DECISIONS ON AID. FINAL DECISIONS ON PENDING ISRAELI REQUESTS FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT-- WHICH I UNDERSTAND IS ABOUT 1 BILLION DOLLARS OVER THE 2.2 BILLION DOLLAR AID BILL-- WILL IN LARGE PART DETERMINE AMOUNT OF AID REQUIRED.

6. NEVERTHELESS, I BELIEVE IT IS UNWISE TO SEND FY 75 BUDGET TO CONGRESS WITH NOTHING RPT NOTHING FOR ISRAEL. ISRAELIS CAN BE EXPECTED TO REACT VIGOROUSLY (AND TO SOME EXTENT THAT HAS ALREADY BEGUN) THROUGH FEAR OF CUTBACK AND THROUGH DESIRE FOR ADDITIONAL AID; THIS NERVOUSNESS ON ISRAELI PART COULD HAVE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON NEGOTIATING ATMOSPHERE HERE. IMPACT IN CONGRESS, BASED ON EXPERIENCE AND MY POLITICAL INSTINCT. IS PREDICTABLE. IN THE END, CONGRESS WILL INSIST ON LARGE AMOUNTS OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE, PROBABLY MORE THAN WOULD BE WARRANTED OR THAN WE MIGHT CONSIDER IN US INTERESTS TO GIVE. ADMINISTRATION, THEREFORE, ENDS UP IN WORST OF POSSIBLE POSITIONS: ISRAEL GETS AID, EXECUTIVE BRANCH GET NO CREDIT, AND, IN PROCESS, WE LOSE CONTROL OF THIS VERY IMPORTANT ASSET IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL.

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7. I HOPE IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO CORRECT WHAT I SEE AS "TACTICAL" MISTAKE WHICH COULD HAVE SERIOUS "STRATEGIC" CONSEQUENCES. I SUGGEST FOLLOWING PROCEDURE:

A) INSERT 300 MILLION DOLLARS FMS AND 50 MILLION DOLLARS SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE FOR ISRAEL IN 75 BUDGET.

B) FOOTNOTE THIS SECTION AND NOTE FINAL DECISIONS RE SECURITY ASSISTANCE FOR ISRAEL FOR FY 75 ARE PENDING AND WILL BE COMING TO CONGRESS AS SOON AS ADEQUATE INFO IS AVAILABLE.

C) INSERT LANGUAGE IN PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS ON SECURITY ASSISTANCE NOTING TENTATIVE NATURE OF FIGURES FOR ISRAEL.

8. IN ORDER TO HELP KEEP ISRAELI CALM AND KEEP CERTAIN

PRE*SURES IN WASHINGTON UNDER CONTROL, I FURTHER RECOMMEND THAT WE IMMEDIATELY "GRANT" AT LEAST 1 BILLION DOLLARS TO GOI FROM 2.2 BILLION DOLLARS ALREADY APPROPRIATED AND AVAILABLE TO COVER COSTS OF EMERGENCY MILITARY AIRLIFT. (IF DECISION ON SALES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WARRANT IT BY NOW, WE COULD AND SHOULD GO UP TO FULL 1.5 BILLION DOLLARS AUTHORIZED.) EVEN IF THIS IS ONLY INTRA-USG TRANSFER OF FUNDS, SUCH A STEP, JUDICIOUSLY PUBLICIZED, WOULD BE USEFUL.

9. I WOULD APPRECIATE EARLIEST REPLY RE REQUESTS FOR INFO AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS MESSAGE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 27 JUL 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, MILITARY ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TELAV00259
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750004-0048
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740174/abbrzaje.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: A) TEL AVIV 0230 B) STATE 7364 C) TEL AVIV 0232 D) STATE 3184
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 AUG 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <12 DEC 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAEL'S FY 1975 ASSISTANCE REQUEST
TAGS: EAID, MASS, IS, US
To: STATE INFO JERUSALEM
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005